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Letter from Director

History never stops, nor does shopping for history

For me, the ideal museum store is a place where I can buy what I saw in the exhibits. I walk from my desk and across the lobby at the Montana Historical Society weekly, to find something that reminds me of an exhibit theme, or that is a replica of an authentic artifact, or that is both a retail item and a living piece of Montana heritage. With the purchase of a beaded bolo tie (I can't let the Governor out-bolo me), or an American Indian doll (my older sister is a doll collector), or a book (the Butte cookbook is as good for the history of that complex hillside city as it is for multinational recipes), I have prolonged

my visit to the museum galleries or to the research center with something I can take home, or, in my fortunate case, take a few steps away to my office.

My ritual gift for old friends from other parts of the West who drop in is a silk scarf. In my first 14 months I have averaged one scarf purchase a month. I confess I bought one as neckwear for myself as well, which gives a certain flair to my dutch-oven camp-cooking outfit. I am a book person, and several books for sale in the store have journeyed that great distance from retail shelf to office shelf. Most recently, *Many Tender Ties*, the story of women's roles in the trans-Canada fur trade, has been my reading, a result of my attendance at the conference we hosted.

I can walk across the hall, no small convenience, to do my history shopping. You have a convenient method of shopping as well—the use of your internet connection. American Indian crafts, Charlie Russell posters, and yes, those silk scarves, are all a click away, at www.montanahistoricalsociety.org/departments/store.

Richard Sims, Director
Montana Historical Society